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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
03/03/04

Monroe County Moves Closer to Upgrading Public Safety Radio System Federal Funds Covering Most of the Costs

Monroe County has moved a step closer to significantly improving public safety for county residents by signing a contract to join the Michigan Public Safety Communications System (MPSCS), the statewide digital two-way radio system operated by the Michigan State Police.

Monroe County Law Enforcement and other emergency response personnel will purchase about 1,025 Motorola mobile and portable two-way radios on the MPSCS. Three towers will be constructed in the county to ensure public safety coverage for all residents. The U.S. federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is providing \$6 million for the Motorola public safety communications system for Monroe County.

"We have an anticipated public safety radio system here," said Monroe County Sheriff Tilman Crutchfield. "This new system represents a dramatic improvement in our ability to protect and serve the citizens of Monroe County."

The MPSCS is among the most advanced public safety radio systems in North America. The system, which replaces the Michigan State Police radio system originally installed in the 1940s, provides 97 percent mobile coverage across the entire state. Most important for public safety, all police, fire and emergency response personnel with radios on the system can speak with each other regardless of where they are in a county of the state.

•MISSION STATEMENT•

"TO PREVENT UNLAWFUL ACTIVITY, ENSURE INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS, AND PROMOTE A SAFE AND SECURE ENVIRONMENT"

Called "interoperability", federal homeland security officials favor public safety radio systems that allow multiple emergency response agencies to communicate with each other.

"We are a border county, so communications between our neighbor counties and our neighbor states is critical, especially at a time when we must do everything to shore up our homeland security," Sheriff Crutchfield said.

Monroe County was nominated by Governor Jennifer Granholm to compete for FEMA funding for the radio system. FEMA encouraged regional interoperability and resulted in awards to 17 of the 50 applicants across the country.

The MPSCS is designed and built by Motorola. To date, 374 federal, state, county and local police and government agencies in Michigan are operating more than 12,000 radios on the MPSCS. Work on finalizing the locations for the Monroe County towers is nearly complete. Once built and tested, the Monroe County portion of the MPSCS is expected to be operational by this fall.

State Police are pleased that the MPSCS has operated and performed exactly as designed. In her January 27th State of the State speech, Governor Granholm said the MPSCS, "was the only public safety radio system in the state that performed flawlessly and continued to provide uninterrupted communications" during the massive August 14, 2003 blackout that shut down power across the northeastern United States and Canada.

"Monroe County's decision to join the MPSCS will enhance public safety services to the citizens of the region by improving the communications capability of first responders," said Michigan State Police Lieutenant Colonel Tom Miller, who oversees the radio system within the agency. "We have seen these results first hand in jurisdictions across the state that have joined the system. In the interest of public safety we are pleased Monroe County has made this decision."